parcels and other items which do not come within the ambit of the Indian Post Office Act, 1898. There is a proposal to amend the Indian Post office Act, 1898. The proposal *inter alia* envisages appointing of Mail Regulatory and Development Authority to regulate mail sector in the country. This proposal has, however, not been finalized.

Saving accounts in post offices

†2462. MISS ANUSUIYA UIKEY:
SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of saving accounts in the post offices of the country as on 31st March, 2004 and the total number of operational accounts as on 30th June, 2007;

(b) the total deposits therein and the details thereof as on 31st March, 2004 and 30th June, 2007, separately; and

(c) the percentage of interest rate being given on the deposits of depositors in post offices and whether the proposal for increase therein in near future is under consideration?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) (i) Total Number of saving accounts as on 31st March, 2004 were 14,42,10,145.

(ii) Total number of operational saving accounts as on 30th June, 2007 are not available. However these accounts as on 31st March, 2007 were 17,55,16,118.

(b) Total outstanding deposit in saving accounts as on 31st March, 2004 was Rs. 13367 crore.

(c) Total outstanding deposit in saving accounts as on 30th June, 2007 was Rs. 18599 crore.

(i) Current percentage of interest rate on deposits in different small saving schemes is as under:—

Name of Scheme	Rate of Interest
1	2
Post Office Saving Account	3.5%
Post Office Time Deposits	
1 Year	6.25%

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

1	2
2 Year	6.50%
3Year	7.25%
5Year	7.50%
Post Office Recurring Deposit	7.50%
Monthly Income Account (MIA)	8.00% (bonus on MIA@10% of the deposit also payable at maturity. Bonus has been withdrawn on new accounts opened *w.e.f.* 13.2.2006.
National Saving Certificates (VIII) issue	8.00%
Public Provident Fund	8.00%
Senior Citizen Saving Scheme-2004	9.00%
Kisan Vikas Patra	Amount double in 8 years 7 months

(ii) There is no proposal currently under consideration of Government to revise the rate of interest on small saving schemes.

Mobile phone connectivity in hilly areas

2463. SHRIMATI VIPLOVE THAKUR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the position of mobile phone lines connectivity in hilly areas particularly in Himachal Pradesh is not satisfactory;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to improve the mobile phone connectivity in Himachal Pradesh;

(c) if so, whether Government have formulated any scheme for this purpose;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (e) The mobile services are provided by telecom service providers in all the twelve districts in Himachal Pradesh Telecom Circle which also includes most of small towns and villages in hilly areas. However, in hilly areas, it is difficult to provide adequate coverage at some places due to hilly terrain.

For improving the mobile connectivity in these areas, the telecom service providers are continuously augmenting their mobile network infrastructure and optimizing the same.